

Contact: Matt Lloyd

PENCE REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT ON IRAQ

Washington, Feb 26, 2003 - WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Mike Pence last night took to the House floor to reaffirm his support for decisive action against Iraq. Citing over 17 violations by the Iraqi dictator of UN resolutions, Pence urged his colleagues to “focus on the facts and the true challenges ahead of us.” Pence’s speech follows.

“We will confront many issues in the 108th Congress,” said Pence. “They will have to do with the economy; our own budget; a debate over cloning, which will come to the House floor this week and to this very Chamber moments from now; reforming Medicare; but nothing can be compared to the issues of war and peace.

“In the midst of an incessant barrage of media alerts and new resolutions being debated before the United Nations, as a member of the Committee on International Relations, I rise tonight to stand with the President of the United States and the strong and unwavering leadership in confronting tyranny which he and the Prime Minister of England and the leaders of some 43 other nations have consistently and courageously provided to the world.

“I am not a combat veteran; it was not part of my generation. But my father was, having seen conflict and bloodshed in the Korean War. I do not welcome war. I do not hope for it. As near as I can tell, from my late father and veterans with whom I have close enough relationships to hear the truth, war is a wicked and a violent enterprise that can consume our children in a conflagration, unthinkable in ordinary life.

“But nevertheless it has come from time to time upon the free nations of the world, and it seems most especially on the United States of America, to be willing to employ the arsenal of democracy to confront force with force as a last resort. We may well be come upon such a time again.

“We are hearing a great deal in the national media about what the facts are or are not, what has been proven and what has not been proven. I felt compelled tonight simply to rise and talk about the facts for what they are, for what we as policymakers in the 107th Congress knew them to be, and for what every member of the Security Council of the United Nations knows them to be today.

"It is said that facts are stubborn things. I offer tonight a few stubborn things.

"For instance, this Congress on this floor and our colleagues in the Senate overwhelmingly gave this President the authority to use America's military power to disarm Iraq. The national legislature of the United States spoke in overwhelming fashion that the need was real and urgent and the President should be empowered under our constitutional authority.

"The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1441. We hear a great deal about new resolutions. I applaud the President's effort to try and exhaust all diplomatic means this week.

"But let us be clear what 1441 said.

"Number one, it said that Iraq is guilty. No objective observer doubts that Iraq has violated 17 U.N. resolutions.

"Number two, it said that Iraq could remedy its guilt through disarmament and disclosure.

"Number three, if it refused to remedy, it would be a material breach, and serious consequences should follow.

"Baghdad is guilty. Baghdad refuses to remedy. Serious consequences are in order. I stand with the President of the United States. I pray with millions of Americans as we will ask, perhaps within the week, our finest to go forward on behalf of liberty again.

"Let us focus on the facts and on the true challenges before us," said Pence.

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